

ANDRAGOGY THROUGH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS IS BORDERLESS

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ABSTRACT: Andragogy is the art and science of helping adults learn. As the number of college students classified as adults increases it is important their learning needs are met. The andragogical principles that frame this model describe how adult students need to know how, what, and why they are learning. Adults also possess the characteristics of self-direction, prior experience, readiness to learn, application orientation, and intrinsic motivation which distinguish the way they learn from traditional pedagogy. Social enterprise uses business methods and the power of the marketplace to advance an agenda; however, it is different from other types of business because the primary purpose is the common good. Social enterprise directly addresses a social need through products, services or employment of disadvantaged people. Social enterprise uses a triple bottom-line; measuring the good for people (staff/faculty, students, customers and community), the planet (environment), and profit (money generated or saved by the social enterprise activities). In the academic setting, social enterprise also measures programs (education, job training, and outcomes), thus reporting a quadruple bottom-line. The educator, acting as a facilitator or co-learner, can utilize the andragogical principles in helping adult students learn in a real-world social enterprise. A social enterprise should coexist with current programs or departments, and not cannibalize prevailing resources. Entrepreneurial activities that involve creative vision and practical market-based strategies should be considered. When start-up costs are not attainable, learning can also occur by helping students create a hypothetical social enterprises.

Keywords: andragogy, adult learning, social enterprise

Andragogy, derived from the Greek words *aner*, meaning “man” or “adult” and *agogus* meaning “leader of” is the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1980, p. 42). The term andragogy was first used in 1833 by a German teacher, Alexander Knapp (Nottingham Andragogy Group, 1988) to describe Plato’s education theory. In 1926 the American Association of Adult Education was formed due to the persistence of educators such as Lindeman (Lindeman & Gessner, 1956), who was the first person noted to use the term andragogy in America.

Knowles revived the term andragogy and built an adult learning model including the principles of andragogy. The andragogical principles are designed to be used by empathetic instructors in a learning environment that is supportive, cooperative, and informal, where learners feel accepted and respected.

Adult students are not content to learn in the traditional pedagogical fashion. As avenues are explored to engage adult learners the social enterprise model has emerged as a practical solution. A social enterprise and its methods use business principles to solve a particular social problem, whether it be local, regional, national, or international (Durieux

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& Stebbins, 2010). Innovative solutions are executed to solve social problems, while helping adults learn, and possibly generate revenue at the same time.

Higher education has evolved due to the intertwined influences of demographic, social, and technological changes (Cross, 1981, p. 2). Since adult learning does not happen in a vacuum, the demographic, social, and technological changes affect what happens in higher education (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007).

Postsecondary education throughout the world is impacted by adult learners. In America, the number of students classified as nontraditional has steadily increased. Adult, or nontraditional, student enrollment grew by 65% from 1970 to 1990. At the turn of the twenty-first century, 73% of the higher education student population was considered nontraditional (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2002). Nontraditional students are “students who are performing adult social roles and have one or more of the following traits: they are 24 years of age or older, may not have entered college the year they graduated high school, do not have the traditional high school diploma, may attend college part-time, work full-time, are financially independent, or have dependent children” (p. 3). In this paper the terms nontraditional and adult student are used interchangeably.

To address the learning needs of adult students, a starting point or set of assumptions is necessary (Kidd, 1959). Adult learning theories have attempted to fill the need. Emerging as model of how adult and pre-adult learners differ, andragogy recognizes the need for an environment that is conducive to helping adults learn. The andragogical principles, developed by Malcolm S. Knowles (1984) identify characteristics of adult learners that distinguish the way adult students learn from elementary, secondary, of traditional postsecondary students.

The principles of andragogy are:

- Need to Know: A unique characteristic of adults is that adults are willing to learn things they need to know due to the perceived opportunity cost involved in the learning process. Adults need to know the benefit of learning something and the negative effect of not learning it.
- Self-concept: Adults are self-directing and prefer to participate in the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating their own learning. Personal growth is at the core of adult self-concept and learning. Together, the learner and educator can set the learning atmosphere as they recognize needs, make goals, identify resources, implement strategies, and evaluate outcomes.
- Prior experience: Adults define themselves in terms of what they have experienced. It is important they can connect learning to their accumulation of experiences and knowledge. Techniques such as peer-to-peer activities, group discussions, problem solving, and laboratory methods use the student’s prior experience.
- Ready to learn: Adults have a readiness-to-learn based on their social roles. Adults are ready to learn things they need to know as it applies to goals they want to achieve. The educator’s role is to help the adult learners attain their goals.

- Application orientation: Adults are problem-centered and application oriented. They need practical application of knowledge using real-world situations. Successful education relates theory to practice.
- Intrinsic motivation: Adults are more intrinsically motivated to learn things that help them solve problems and result in internal payoffs. For them, the quality of life and self-esteem are stronger than external motivators. Intrinsic motivation is strong when adults know why they need to learn, and they have a choice in their learning process. To help adults learn, educators need expertise, empathy, enthusiasm, and clarity (Knowles, 1990, pp. 170-173).

The andragogical principles are focused on adult characteristics which distinguish the way adults learn. The strength of andragogy, when tailored to the learner and the situation, is that the principles can be applied to adult learning and “could be vital in responding to the expanding adult student body” (Knowles, 1973, p. 42).

Establishing an educational social enterprise employing the principles of andragogy necessitates the leader, department head or educator, to have expertise and a passion for the enterprise. Use of the andragogical principles requires educators to trust and empathize with the students (Knowles, 1990). The instructor should utilize a learner-centered process and accommodate learner uniqueness in planning and delivery of education (Henschke, 1989). When the instructor applies the principles of andragogy in the learning process, the unique characteristics of adult students will be recognized.

Andragogy contains some elements of behavioral, humanistic, transformative, and experiential adult learning theories. Andragogy is grounded in humanistic theory in describing how learners acquire and process knowledge. Using humanistic theory, Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs includes an individual’s physiological, safety, belongingness and self-esteem needs that must be satisfied before the individual can reach growth fulfillment or self-actualization. The growth needs impact the principles of andragogy because it deals with the learners’ need to know, aesthetic needs, and self-actualization; described as the “full use and exploitation of talent, capacity, and potential (Maslow, 1970, p. 150).

The heavy influence of humanistic theory noted, there are some shared elements of the behavioral learning theory with regard to practical problem solving, recognition of the abilities of individuals, attention to the range of skills of adults, importance on the evaluation process, and consideration of prior experience.

Andragogy also incorporates three themes of the transformative learning theory; experience, critical reflection, and rational discourse. Transformational learning is central to self-directed learning. It uses the learners’ “frame of reference” (Merriam, 2008, p. 5) that relies on prior experience to develop a system of belief that leads to future achievement (Mezirow, 1996).

Andragogy through social enterprise uses three areas of cognitive knowledge generation identified by Jurgen Habermas (1970); technical, practical, and emancipatory. The technical area of learning is done through tasks that give the learner skills or competencies.

The practical area involves social interaction and helps the learners construct meaning of knowledge. The emancipatory area helps learners identify problems and understand options to assume responsibility for decision making.

Jack Mezirow (1981), took transformative learning, based on critical theory, and combined it with Knowles' andragogical theory to compile the Charter for Andragogy. He was of the position that the educator in an andragogical learning environment must establish mutual trust, decrease dependency, facilitate problem solving, and help the learner understand choices. The learner should be allowed to define and make decisions regarding learning needs, plan and evaluate learning objectives, use his or her own experience, and use the experience of others in the learning process.

Adult learning occurs from prior experience and through new frames of reference (Mezirow, 2000). A study modeled on the Charter for Andragogy utilizing the Andragogy in Practice Inventory instrument (Suanmali, 1981), found adult educators were in agreement on the core concept of self-direction in learning. By focusing on how adult students change their perspective as they learn, insight can be gained into the connections between vocation, commitment, and learning.

Andragogy through social enterprise employs experiential learning. The learner-centered approach prompts students' interaction with their education. Experience in education with a concern for linking experience with reflection, or understanding with doing, was promoted by Dewey (*Democracy and Education*, 1916). He proclaimed it was not enough to simply know something, because one cannot fully understand without doing. Dewey's continuity and interaction was a three-pronged experiential learning process that linked personal development, work, and education (Kolb, 1984). A feature of experiential learning is that motivation is intrinsic since action occurs at the beginning instead of the end of learning. In experiential learning there is a generalization from the experience to the principle being applied in other circumstances. Learning from experience is retained since the association with concrete actions is imbedded in the memory of the learner, not just associated with general principles or abstract symbols (Keeton, 1976).

Throughout history, educators of adults had distinctive techniques for engaging adult learners. The Hebrew prophets had words that meant learn, teach, instruct, guide, lead, and examples that suggests the use of andragogy in early times (Savicevic, 1999). The notable teachers of ancient history such as Confucius, Lao Tse, Jesus, Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, and Quintilian were all teachers of adults.

The early Hebrew teachers used the process of discovery and "learning by doing" (Knowles, 1973, p. 42). The case method was used where a situation was described in the form of a parable and the learners examined the characteristics for possible solutions. The ancient Greeks used Socratic dialogue, a problem-based learning, where the facilitator presented a problem and the students sought an answer by using reflection and drawing on their experience to get a solution (Knowles, Holton, III, & Swanson, 2005). Those teachers understood that adults learn through problem-solving and have the need and capacity to be self-directing (Lindeman & Gessner, 1956). At the same time the teachers

in Rome used a confrontational method of learning where the group stated an opinion and defended it. The famous teachers of ancient times understood that adults had the capacity and need to be self-directing and to learn through problem-solving. Thus, they used the principles of adult learning, andragogy, before the pedagogical model was invented (Lindeman & Gessner, 1956).

Monastic schools introduced the pedagogical model with structured curriculum and didactic or teacher-directed instruction (Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990). The pedagogical model follows the assumptions that the teacher has full responsibility and makes all decisions as to what, how, when, and if learning will occur. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the academic system that spread to the secular world replaced andragogy with established curriculum which became the conventional education from childhood through adulthood.

The second half of the twentieth century brought an influx of nontraditional, adult students into higher education and a need to move from the pedagogical model of teacher-directed learning. Psychologists and educators looking at the biological, psychological, and social development of people believed the pedagogical assumptions were inconsistent with adult learners' characteristics. Adults are responsible for their lives and learning; consequently, they need a model of learning that addresses adult characteristics in the learning environment (Knowles et al., 2005). Andragogy is viewed by some as the "theory of adult education" (Merriam & Brockett, 1997, p. 135). Adult educators who follow the andragogical principles use instructional strategies designed to meet the learners' needs by keeping the student at the center of the learning experience.

A way to address the adult learning characteristics, using the principles of andragogy, is to establish a social enterprise program. In developing such a program, using the andragogical process, one must establish an environment conducive to learning, prepare the learners, engage in participative planning, diagnose the learning needs of the students, and create learning objectives. Developing a social enterprise also requires designing a learning plan, assessing and executing the plan, appraising objectives, and evaluating the learners' needs (Holton, Wilson, & Bates, 2009).

A social enterprise involves a "business activity and a social purpose" (Lynch & Walls, 2009, p. 9). A social enterprise is a social, mission driven, entity which applies market-based strategies to achieve a social purpose. Its primary purpose is the common good; the individual's basic right in society, the right of everyone to have the opportunity to freely shape his/her own life by responsible actions. A social enterprise applies an entrepreneurial approach to address social issues and bring about positive change in a community; it uses business principles to create social change by launching and managing a venture (Durieux & Stebbins, 2010).

Andragogy through social enterprise can be accomplished by establishing an actual working enterprise that meets a social need. Starting a real-world social enterprise as a learning environment to address adult characteristics will require expanding the vision of the organization, college or university. When it is not fiscally viable to start a real-world social enterprise, a second option could be used. Design a hypothetical social enterprise

where market-based concepts are taught to the students. If the second option is the only feasible route, it may still be possible to help a disenfranchised group in a small way.

Starting a social enterprise requires innovation, accountability, and the ability to leverage resources you do not control (Bornstein & Davis, 2010). The requirements of innovation, accountability and leveraging resources are basically met by having a unique niche that is vital to a group of people, counting and measuring everything, and networking with businesses and the community for the resources you need in order to be successful. A social enterprise shifts emphasis from charitable relief to improving social conditions. Help should not be paternalistic but focus on dignity with respectful transactions. The key is to build capacity and self-reliance. A social enterprise is built on the premise of an ancient proverb, “give a man a fish and you will feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you will feed him for a lifetime” (“Maimonides,” n.d., expression 326751). The words of Dr. Martin Luther King were similar in his statement, “true compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring” (Durieux & Stebbins, 2010, p. 36). A social enterprise is not compassion; it is allowing people to live up to their potential.

Exercises using social innovation and individualized business models involve creative vision and practical market-based strategies. The educator’s role, whether establishing a workable social enterprise or helping students design a hypothetical social enterprise, is to foster self-directed learning, enhance problem-solving and critical thinking skills (Galbraith, 2004). Educators should encourage student ideas, questions, initiative, and collaboration (Bornstein & Davis, 2010).

Idea processing before starting a new social enterprise would include answers to the following questions:

- What is the product or service the enterprise will provide?
- What benefits will it offer and what needs will it meet?
- Is the product or service already being provided? If so, who is the competitor?
- How will it be produced and delivered?
- What is the intended market and customer? Describe the buyer.
- What is your competitive advantage?
- What is involved in conducting the business after it is up and running?

Social enterprises and business enterprises are similar but their primary objectives are different. Although a social enterprise is a revenue-generating business, its social objectives are reinvestment of surpluses in the business or in the community, not to deliver profit to shareholders and owners. “In a social enterprise the bottom line is to maximize social impact for a need that is not being met by typical business” (Bornstein & Davis, 2010, p. 30).

Accountability is important. To have an effective social enterprise the pursuit of accountability is the mechanism to make sure the goal of the social cause is met (Dees, Emerson, & Economy, 2001). It is an opportunity to show the added value to the

community. An education social enterprise would evaluate using a quadruple bottom line; measuring the social, financial, environmental, and educational impact of the enterprise.

Developing a social enterprise entails identifying and applying practical solutions to social problems by combining opportunity with innovation and resourcefulness. It also entails finding a new product, service or approach to a social problem. In addition, it entails concentrating on the social value creation, leveraging resources, measuring and monitoring the impact, and a willingness to share insights and innovation for replication (Elkington & Hartigan, 2008).

The acronym DESIGN can be used to create the framework for a social enterprise learning laboratory with the following steps: describe, establish, structure, identify, guide and narrow. The Small Business Administration is a good resource for information and templates for start-up of an enterprise (SBA, 2015). It suggests the following steps:

- Describe the business and how it is a social enterprise. Explain the core business offering. What is the mission? Write a mission statement describing (a) Key market: Who is target market? (b) Contribution: What is the service or product that will be provided? (c) Distinction: How is product or service unique? If the mission is a cause for the common good, you would have to dismantle the whole business to get rid of the mission statement.
- Establish the need and available target markets. Balance impact and profit. Have a big vision and small plans.
- Structure a competitive analysis. Make a SWOT analysis listing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Create SMART and SMARTER goals for the social enterprise. Goals should be specific; who, what, where, when, which, and why? Goals should be measurable; establish criteria for measuring how much, how many and when things are accomplished. Goals should be attainable; develop the abilities, skills and financial capacity to reach them. Goals should be realistic; they must be consistent with other goals and fit into the immediate and long-range plans. Goals should be time based; there must be a target date for meeting goals. The Smarter goals also must be ethical and reasonable. Always plan and adjust.
- Identify parts of a marketing plan and create one for the social enterprise. Make a marketing plan using the 4 P's: Price, Product, Place, and Promotion. Conduct a market analysis and discuss how to market the social enterprise.
- Guide the process with a 3-year strategic plan, including goals, means for reaching goals, capitalization and implementation. Strategy is setting long-term goals and implementing the method for achieving the goals. Strategy describes what it is, what it does, and why it does it. Strategic planning is continual.
- Narrow the start-up focus to the financial base that will fund the plan. Create financial health; focus on efficiency and results. Measure the social impact against core purposes.

A social enterprise can be designed as a for-profit or not-for-profit. Social enterprise is known as the missing middle sector between government, nonprofit, and business. It addresses social concerns more efficiently than government, more sustainably and

creatively than the nonprofit sector and more generously than business (Geelan, 2013). A business operated for the sole purpose to fund a nonprofit or a business that gives a portion of its profits for charitable causes is not a social enterprise. A social enterprise has at its core the common good; its reason for existence is to achieve a social purpose.

Measuring the impact of a social enterprise is different because outcomes are not merely measured for the fiscal return on investment (ROI) of business. Social return on investment (SROI) uses a principles-based method for measuring extra value, such as environmental, educational, and social values, that are not reflected in conventional financial accounting relative to resources invested. It can be used to evaluate the impact on stakeholders, to identify ways to improve performance, and to enhance investments. The SROI method provides a consistent quantitative approach to managing the impacts of a social enterprise project. It accounts for social impact identified by the stakeholders, with financial proxy values assigned to the impacts, which do not typically have market values. The methods can also use qualitative and narrative types of information for assigning value. “SROI is somewhat like a cost-benefit analysis designed to allow the decision-makers to evaluate and improve the social, educational, and environmental impacts of the enterprise” (Miller & Hall, 2012, p. 4).

The social impact is measured against the core purpose of the enterprise. Measures may include how many clients, students, or participants have made a life-change. The life-change could range from having food, clothing, shelter, clean water, transportation, medication, child-rearing skills, staying clean of drugs, alcohol, violence and other areas of life improvement. Financial reporting requires making a budget and reporting the money coming into the social enterprise and money going out. This is similar to every enterprise but its impact is clarified by the reporting of the other areas of influence for the social enterprise. Environmental reporting means measuring sustainability; the efforts undertaken to improve the environment that are embedded into the social enterprise. This may include areas such as recycling, using clean energy, and other environmentally-friendly endeavors. Measuring and reporting the bottom line of education could include grades, completions, job placement, further education, licensures, projects, and acquiring a marketable skill. Deciding the areas of measurement and reporting for the return-on-investment is germane to social innovation and the design of a social enterprise.

A social enterprise can produce measurable public benefits such as fiscal responsibility, economic opportunity, public safety, and a reduction in costs of public support. A social enterprise could provide job skills and employment by providing a path to economic self-sufficiency. Teaching job skills may improve the human capital and create jobs for economic renewal. A social enterprise could disrupt the cycle of poverty, drug abuse, crime, incarceration, and homelessness; therefore making the community a safer place to live. According to Geelan (2013), a social enterprise “operates more efficiently than public funds; there is still accountability but without bureaucracy” (para. 979). The Stanford Social Innovation Review defines social innovation as, “a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals” (Phills, Deiglmeier, & Miller, 2008, p. 2).

Higher education has not widely embraced the value of education through social enterprise. However, there are some colleges and universities who are starting social enterprises or teaching the concepts to their students. Although it may not be overtly stated, these entities are using many of the principles of andragogy when teaching social enterprise. Harvard Business School (HBS) has an active social enterprise component. An associate professor of HBS stated, “one way to think about social enterprise is that social entrepreneurs often have to implement changes that break with the norms in their environment” (Battilana, 2015). Establishing a social enterprise using the principles of andragogy would undoubtedly break with the norms in many education environments.

One successful educational social enterprise is an accredited school established to train graduates of drug and alcohol recovery programs in the culinary arts. Students, under chef’s supervision, operate a restaurant and catering business as a practical learning laboratory. The students learn all aspects of the business through hands-on learning, have seated class time, and testing to earn national certifications. At the end of one year the graduate has several opportunities; articulate into a college culinary program, apply for a six-month externship at an upscale resort with a potential employment opportunity, or start a culinary career at a restaurant, hospital, or assisted living facility. The school in this example consistently has completion and placement rates above 91% for the at-risk population (<http://www.victorytradeschool.edu>).

Creating a social enterprise may seem to be a daunting task, but it need not be a cost burden. Due to the social enterprise framework of helping others, there are often community resources that can be leveraged. Knowing how to leverage resources is central to addressing social needs as well as financial needs. Starting with a hypothetical enterprise can solidify the questions and answers for the planning stage. When utilizing the principles of andragogy in helping adults learn, it is a natural progression to establishing a social enterprise learning laboratory.

An educational social enterprise requires the instructor to have expertise and a passion for the enterprise. The educator must have empathy with and trust of the students (Knowles, 1990). In planning and delivery of education in a social enterprise the instructor should use a “learner-centered process and accommodate learner uniqueness” (Henschke, 1989, p. 84). The instructor should also use the principles of andragogy in the learning process and recognize the unique characteristics of adult students. The principles of andragogy demonstrate that adult learners need to know how, what and why they are learning. Those students are self-directed and use their prior experience to connect in learning new information; they are ready to learn when they believe the knowledge will help them achieve future goals. Furthermore, the practical application of the social enterprise facilitates the adults need for problem-centered application in real-world situations and fosters the intrinsic motivation of the adult student.

When establishing a social enterprise the main goal is to determine the social aspect of the enterprise; the common good. It is also suggested that business principles should be used while keeping the core of the enterprise social. Establish measurements for the

social return on investment using a quadruple bottom line. Incorporate the principles of andragogy into the social enterprise for maximum impact on adult learning.

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